

A. R. Ammons

Poet Description:

Born in a farmhouse near Whiteville, North Carolina, the son of a tobacco farmer, Archie Randolph Ammons served on a Navy destroyer escort in World War II. He studied biology and chemistry at Wake Forest College in his home state and went on to literary studies at Berkeley. In 1964, after working for almost a decade as an executive at a glassmaking firm, he took a teaching job at Cornell University. The landscapes of the places where he has lived—from North Carolina to the south coast of New Jersey and finally to the hills and fields around Ithaca, New York—figure prominently in his poetry. Like Muriel Rukeyser before him, he makes heavy use of the colon in punctuation; it is a way of visualizing relationships of continuity, equivalence, and interdependence in the things he describes. His nature poems mix exact local representation with transcendental longings and moments of wit and irony; he is often compared to Emerson. From nature's mutability he learns a mental discipline of adaptability and a recognition that absolute demarcation is not offered to us by the world around us. Thus in "Corson's Inlet," very nearly his signature poem, he walks a changing shoreline with no inherent enclosures and celebrates its devotion to process. The book-length poem *Sphere* (1974) may be his masterpiece.

Race/Ethnicity:

European ^[1]

Picture:



Gender:

Male ^[2]

Sexuality:

Straight ^[3]

First Name:

A. R.

Last Name:

Ammons

Birth & Death Dates:

Thursday, February 18, 1926 to Sunday, February 25, 2001

School of Poetry:

Other ^[4]

Birth Place:

Whiteville , North Carolina

United States

See map: [Google Maps](#) [5]

North Carolina US

Death Place:

Ithaca , New York

United States

See map: [Google Maps](#) [6]

New York US

Group visibility:

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[1] <http://modernamericanpoetry.org/category/race-ethnicity/european>

[2] <http://modernamericanpoetry.org/category/gender/male>

[3] <http://modernamericanpoetry.org/category/sexuality/straight>

[4] <http://modernamericanpoetry.org/school-poetry/other>

[5] <http://maps.google.com?q=46.880607+-87.363281+%28%2C+Whiteville%2C+NC%2C+%2C+us%29>

[6] <http://maps.google.com?q=43.340818+-90.281792+%28%2C+Ithaca%2C+NY%2C+%2C+us%29>